

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Community and Faith-based Organizations

If you lead or manage a community or faith-based organization, you may have questions about how to handle issues related to COVID-19. Below are answers to common questions on how to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help protect the health of those in your organization.

For more information about the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/. For the most recent updates on COVID-19 in Ohio, please visit the Ohio Department of Health at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/>.

For more COVID-19 resources from Columbus Public Health – including for community and faith-based organizations – please visit www.columbus.gov/coronavirus (see under Resources > Community Services and Organizations).

What preventive measures should be taken at an organizational level to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like the virus that causes COVID-19?

- Educate and emphasize the importance of the everyday personal prevention actions.
- Encourage and support staff, volunteers and members of your congregation to stay home when they are sick. Remind them to stay home and not come to work until:
 - At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
 - At least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including easy access to clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Minimize, where possible, close contact and the sharing of objects, including food and drink. This includes modifying practices such as the sharing of communal sacramental cups and wafers, or practices that consist of congregants shaking hands and hugging each other as part of a greeting.
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, faucet handles and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.

What should our organization be prepared to do if there is increased community transmission of COVID-19?

Increased community transmission of COVID-19 would indicate growing risk to the general public and that additional precautions may need to be taken to contain any local community transmission. Organizations should have a plan and be prepared to take these additional actions, if recommended by Public Health:

- Have a plan to communicate with your staff and your congregation.
- Allow workers and volunteers to stay home if someone in their house is sick or school closures have occurred.
- Decrease the frequency of contact among workers or volunteers at your organization. Offer telecommuting if feasible and replace in-person meetings with video or telephone conferences.
- Implement ways to continue essential services if on-site operations are reduced temporarily.
- Houses of worship need to follow all government mandated restrictions.
- For most faith-based communities that means modifying, postponing or canceling large community events where people are in close contact with others for an extended period is necessary.

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions, *continued*

- Hosting virtual meetings or live streaming sermons is a great way to support your congregation without jeopardizing their safety.

Where can I get more information that pertains to my volunteer staff?

Please follow the following link to our volunteer recommendations fact sheet [found here](#).

Where can I get more business oriented information that pertains to myself and/or my employees?

Please follow the following link to our business specific frequently asked questions fact sheet [found here](#).